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Security Council

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Letter dated 8 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to attach herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of June 2003 (see annex).

This assessment has been prepared under my own responsibility following consultations with members of the Council, pursuant to the note by the President of the Security Council dated 12 June 1997 (S/1997/451) and should not be considered as representing the views of the Council.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gennady **Gatilov**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

03-46302 (E) 130803

Annex to the letter dated 8 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the Presidency of the Russian Federation (June 2003)

Introduction

Under the Presidency of the Russian Federation the Security Council addressed a wide range of issues on its agenda, inter alia in Africa, the Middle East/Palestine, Iraq, Cyprus and Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro). The situation in Afghanistan was considered, with specific emphasis on illicit drugs.

In total during the month of June the Security Council held 14 formal meetings and 15 consultations of the whole, and adopted four resolutions and three presidential statements. The President made several statements to the press on behalf of the Council members.

In June the Council dispatched missions to Central Africa and West Africa.

Africa

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 4 June, during informal consultations, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guehenno, introduced to the members of the Security Council the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2003/211). He also informed the Council members about his latest trip to the country and the situation on the ground.

The Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Carolyn McAskie, briefed the Council members on key developments in the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in Ituri Province and North and South Kivu, on the basis of the findings of her recent mission to the country.

On 19 June, during informal consultations, the Council continued to consider the recommendations contained in the second special report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/566 and Corr.1).

On 26 June, during informal consultations, members of the Council heard a briefing from the Secretariat on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly the latest developments in the eastern part of the country.

The President issued a press statement after the meeting.

At a formal meeting on 26 June, the Council adopted resolution 1489 (2003) extending the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo until 30 July 2003.

Côte d'Ivoire

During informal consultations on 3 June, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, briefed the Council on the latest developments in Côte d'Ivoire and on the preparations for establishing the United Nations mission in that country. The Council members welcomed the progress in the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, expressed satisfaction at the presentation to the National Assembly, by the Prime Minister, of a draft programme for implementing the Agreement, renewed their appreciation for the peacekeeping efforts of the French and ECOWAS forces, and stressed again their concern at the humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire. They called on the Ivorian parties to continue to take the Linas-Marcoussis process forward and to respect human rights and international humanitarian law. The President issued a press statement after the meeting.

Guinea-Bissau

During a public meeting on 19 June, the Representative of the Secretary-General, David Stephen, presented the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in that country (S/2003/621). The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council and Permanent Representative of South Africa, Dumisani Kumalo, representatives of Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau), as well as members of the Council, made statements. The Council members appealed to the country's leaders to organize in a timely and effective manner the crucial forthcoming legislative elections, which should be transparent, fair and credible, to promulgate the new Constitution and to have the President and Vice-President of the Supreme Court duly elected without further delay. They called on the Government of Guinea-Bissau to take the necessary steps to facilitate a constructive dialogue with the international community and the Bretton Woods institutions, and appealed to the donor community to contribute financially to the implementation of the political and economical process in Guinea-Bissau. They stressed the importance of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in solving the problems of Guinea-Bissau, and called on the country's Government to fully endorse the partnership approach defined by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Council.

The Council members adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/8).

Liberia

On 9 June during informal consultations, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Kieran Prendergast, briefed the Council on the most recent developments in Liberia.

Members of the Council reaffirmed support for the peace efforts of ECOWAS and the peace talks at Akosomo, Ghana; called upon stakeholders in the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and conclude a ceasefire agreement so as to give the peace process a chance to succeed; appealed to the parties to provide security guarantees for safe and unhindered access by humanitarian agencies to vulnerable groups; and also appealed to the international community to provide immediate

assistance to the Liberian people to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Liberia. After the meeting the President made a statement to the press.

On 11 June during informal consultations, Council members were briefed by the Department of Political Affairs on the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Liberia (S/2003/582) and the ongoing peace talks in Ghana between the Government of Liberia and the Liberian parties, as well as the situation on the ground.

After the meeting the President issued a statement to the press, in which Council members expressed grave concern at the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Liberia, urged all combatants in the strongest terms to immediately cease hostilities and agree to the ceasefire, and stressed in particular the urgent need for the combatants to spare the lives and property of innocent civilians.

On 13 June during informal consultations, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tuliameni Kalomoh, briefed the Council on the situation in Liberia, which was characterized by confirmed heavy fighting between the government armed forces and rival armed opposition groups. After the meeting the President issued a statement to the press in which Council members expressed their grave concern over the situation in Liberia, agreed with the estimation of the situation by the Secretary-General, and welcomed the efforts of ECOWAS to ensure the implementation of the ceasefire agreement.

Sierra Leone

On 4 June the diamond embargo on Sierra Leone expired. The Security Council agreed not to renew the measures and on 5 June the President issued a statement to the press on the matter.

Security Council mission

On 18 June at a public meeting of the Council, the head of the Security Council mission to Central Africa and Permanent Representative of France, Jean-Marc de La Sablière, presented to the Security Council the report of the mission and informed the Council members about the meetings of the mission with the regional heads of State.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 9 June the President expressed condolences to the Government of Germany in connection with the terrorist attack in Kabul against German peacekeepers. Four soldiers were killed and many others wounded.

At a public meeting on 17 June, the Security Council considered the situation in Afghanistan with specific focus on the threats presented by drugs originating in Afghanistan, including the issues of their production, consumption and trafficking on the national, regional and international levels.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa, briefed the Council.

It was noted that security remained a serious challenge facing Afghanistan. Recognizing the link between illicit drug trafficking and terrorism, the Council stressed that security should be enhanced by continued coordinated efforts to combat the production of illicit drugs in Afghanistan, as well as to interdict drug trafficking beyond its borders.

The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/7) that highlighted the need to promote efforts by neighbouring countries to stop transboundary trafficking of drugs, including increased cooperation among them to strengthen anti-narcotic controls to curb the drug flow. It supported the strategy of the Afghan Transitional Administration to eliminate illicit opium poppy cultivation by 2013 and reduce the demand for drugs globally.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 13 June, during an open meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East. He stressed that the successful summit in Aqaba had generated enormous hopes and expectations. At the same time the continuation of violence seriously undermined efforts to renew the peace process. He emphasized that it was important for both Israelis and Palestinians to stay the course of peace and start implementing the Quartet's road map. He also briefed the Council on the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians, which had not improved despite the steps towards renewal of the political process.

The members of the Council condemned violence and terrorism, and stressed the need for Israel to take practical measures to ease the humanitarian burden of the Palestinians.

The President issued a statement to the press in which on behalf of the Council he expressed serious concern at the continuing and increasing violence, supported the Quartet's road map, reiterated the demand for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, and reconfirmed the importance of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks.

On 25 June the Council held consultations on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on the latest report of the Secretary-General, emphasizing his recommendation to extend the mandate of UNDOF until 31 December.

The members of the Council supported the proposal of the Secretary-General. They also stressed the necessity of making active efforts aimed at achieving comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

On 26 June the Council adopted resolution 1488 (2003), extending the mandate of UNDOF until 31 December 2003. A presidential statement was adopted which reflected the Council's view that the situation in the Middle East was very tense and likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem could be reached.

On the same day the President made a statement to the press in which he expressed support for the outcome of the meeting of the Quartet held in Amman on 22 June.

Iraq

On 5 June during a formal meeting, the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), Hans Blix, introduced his thirteenth quarterly report. He emphasized that in the period during which it carried out inspections and monitoring in Iraq, UNMOVIC had not found evidence of the continuation or resumption of programmes of weapons of mass destruction. The lack of findings could be because the items were unilaterally destroyed or were effectively concealed by the Iraqi authorities. He expressed the opinion that in the new environment in Iraq it should be possible to establish the truth.

The Executive Chairman noted that in resolution 1483 (2003) the Council had declared its intention to revisit the mandate of UNMOVIC. The Commission remained ready to resume work in Iraq as an independent verifier or to conduct long-term monitoring should the Council so decide. In this context the Chairman said that the core expertise available within UNMOVIC remained a valuable asset which the Council could use where the services of an independent body were required for verification or monitoring, particularly in the field of biological weapons and missiles for which there existed no international verification organizations.

After the briefing the President of the Security Council, taking note of the intention of Mr. Blix to retire from his post, expressed sincere gratitude to him for his service and appreciation for his efforts undertaken to implement the mandate of UNMOVIC.

During the consultations some members of the Council indicated the necessity to use the potential of UNMOVIC to close the Iraqi disarmament file. The representatives of coalition States informed the Council about their own efforts in this area. Some members supported the idea of using the expertise available within UNMOVIC for the purposes of international verification and monitoring, while others emphasized that the role of UNMOVIC should be limited by the Iraqi disarmament dossier.

At its informal consultations on 16 June, the Council considered the report submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 16 (c) of resolution 1483 (2003). Members of the Council raised numerous questions regarding the financial modalities of the phasing-out process of the oil-for-food programme. At the request of several delegations it was decided to continue consideration of the report in the Committee established by resolution 661 (1990).

On 16 June during consultations, the High-level Coordinator, Yuli Vorontsov, in accordance with resolution 1284 (1999) introduced to the Council the Secretary-General's quarterly report on Kuwaiti property and archives. He noted that in the pre-war period the cooperation of Iraqi authorities in resolving this humanitarian issue had been limited. He stressed that, while some property and some documents had been handed over, the Kuwaiti archives, together with military equipment seized by Iraq, remained largely unreturned. The Coordinator expressed his intention to

continue his activity in order to close the problem of Kuwaiti property and archives. The members of the Council supported his further activity in the humanitarian area, regarding both Kuwaiti property and missing persons.

At its informal consultations on 26 June, the Council was briefed by the Executive Director of the Iraq Programme, Benon Sevan, on the implementation of paragraphs 16 and 17 of resolution 1483 (2003). The Council members expressed their resolve to continue to monitor closely the phasing-out of the humanitarian programme.

Europe

Cyprus

On 6 June the Council considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, informed the Council that during the past six months the situation along the ceasefire line had remained calm. At the same time he expressed regret about the continuing violations of the status quo ante at Strovilia.

He also stressed that recent positive developments were not a substitute for a comprehensive settlement and that such a settlement could not be achieved without a political commitment of both sides to the "Annan plan" and a firm timetable to finalize negotiations.

Members of the Council supported the activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and urged the Turkish Cypriot side and the Turkish forces to rescind all remaining restrictions on UNFICYP.

The President of the Council met with the representatives of Cyprus, Greece, the Turkish Cypriot community and Turkey. The parties confirmed that they maintained their well-known positions vis-à-vis the situation in Cyprus.

At a formal meeting on 11 June, the Council adopted resolution 1486 (2003), extending the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period ending 15 December 2003. Before the adoption of the resolution, in accordance with precedent, the President informed the Council about the result of his consultations with the parties.

Abkhazia, Georgia

During informal consultations on 6 June, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, informed the members of the Council that on 5 June one Danish and two German military observers and a local interpreter of UNMIG were kidnapped when on patrol in the upper Kodori Valley. He stressed that the United Nations was taking measures to release the hostages.

The representative of Germany urged the United Nations Secretariat to refrain from actions that might put in danger the life of the hostages.

The President of the Council made a statement to the press condemning the kidnapping and urging a speedy release of the United Nations personnel.

On 11 June the Assistant Secretary-General informed the Council that the hostages had been released and that the Special Representative of the Secretary-

General, Heidi Tagliavini, had spoken by telephone with the President of Georgia, Edward Shevardnadze, who, inter alia, had stated that all responsible for the incident should be brought to justice.

Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro

On 3 June the Council held consultations at which the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, briefed the members on recent developments relating to privatization in Kosovo and to the promulgation by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Michael Steiner, of Regulation 2003/13, on the transformation of the right of use to socially owned immovable property, commonly known as the Land Use Regulation. A letter to the President from the Permanent Representative of Serbia and Montenegro to the United Nations on the subject was circulated to the members for their information.

On 6 June the Council held consultations at which the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations informed the members about the brutal murder of three Kosovo Serb residents in Obilić municipality in Kosovo and on the steps taken by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to find and bring to justice the perpetrators of that horrible crime, including the establishment of a nine-member UNMIK special police squad to investigate the crime, with special advisers from both the Kosovo Serb and the Kosovo Albanian communities. Members of the Council strongly condemned the crime and stressed that the murders in Obilić were a serious setback to the efforts to foster multi-ethnicity in Kosovo and create conditions for the return of refugees. The President issued a statement to the press after the meeting.

On 10 June the Council held a public meeting to consider the situation in Kosovo. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on developments since the previous briefing on 23 April. He stressed that, on the fourth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1244 (1999), progress had been significant, but that challenges remained in such key areas as freedom of movement, meaningful minority participation, refugee returns and dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

Members of the Council reaffirmed their support for establishing the appropriate security, economic and legislative conditions to allow the minorities to become an integral part of political, economic, social and cultural life in Kosovo. They recalled that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government had, as their particular responsibility, to establish a climate conducive to implementing the objectives of the international community for the benefit of the entire Kosovo population and, inter alia, that the Kosovo Assembly must refrain from those initiatives that ran counter to resolution 1244 (1999) or the Constitutional Framework. Council members supported the Special Representative's "standards before status" policy and urged both sides to refrain from statements and actions which prejudiced the final status of Kosovo.

The representatives of Greece (in the capacity of Presidency of the European Union) and Serbia and Montenegro were invited, at their request, to participate in the discussion and made statements.

General issues

United Nations peacekeeping

At a public meeting on 12 June the Security Council adopted resolution 1487 (2003) by 12 votes in favour to none against, with three abstentions (France, Germany and the Syrian Arab Republic). The resolution, inter alia, provides immunity from prosecution by the International Criminal Court for United Nations peacekeepers from countries not parties to the statute of the Court for a 12-month period beginning 1 July 2003, extending an exemption originally requested in July 2002.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

On 20 June at a formal meeting of the Council the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Kenzo Oshima, gave an oral briefing on the progress made in the implementation of the aide-memoire adopted by the Council in March 2002 and on the elaboration of the road map for the protection of civilians. Special attention was given to the specific situations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Liberia, including problems of access of humanitarian organizations to the vulnerable population, safety and security of humanitarian and associated personnel, and prevention of violations of the rules and principles of international law by the parties to armed conflict.

The Council members supported the United Nations efforts and underlined the importance of developing a comprehensive approach to the prevention of armed conflict, effectively combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, ending impunity and prosecuting those responsible for crimes against civilians and humanitarian personnel, and improving coordination among international humanitarian and non-governmental organizations.